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Committee for Programme and Coordination
Forty-second session
10 June-5 July 2002
Agenda item 4 (c)
Adoption of the report of the Committee on the work of its forty-second session

Draft report

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Addendum

Programme questions: evaluation

(Item 4 (c))

In-depth evaluation of the subprogrammes on General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and Economic and Social Council support and coordination

1. At its 2nd, 3rd and 4th meetings, on 10 and 11 June 2002, the Committee considered the note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the in-depth evaluation of the subprogrammes on General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and Economic and Social Council support and coordination (E/AC.51/2002/4).

2. The Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services introduced the report.

Discussion

3. The Committee welcomed the report, noting that it was useful, comprehensive and documented a number of good lessons. The Committee was pleased to see that the General Assembly and Economic and Social Council Affairs Division had overall provided efficient services. The view was expressed that the Division for Economic and Social Council Support and Coordination could be considered a model. Useful innovations such as organizing round tables, panel discussions, seminars and joint meetings with the Bretton Woods institutions were noted.

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4. Support was expressed for a more active role of the Secretariat in making suggestions on the grouping and scheduling of agenda items, in submitting timely reports, in improving the utilization of meeting time at the beginning of sessions, and in advising non-governmental organizations on the process of application for consultative status.

5. The question was raised whether the lack of invitations to eminent persons explained the low participation of senior officials from United Nations organizations in the high-level segments, noted in table 4. Concern was expressed regarding the marginal participation of non-governmental organizations from Africa in the work of the Economic and Social Council and the question was raised whether insufficient public awareness was preventing them from increasing their number.

6. Concern was expressed that some recommendations were aimed at enhancing the role of the Secretariat with respect to aspects of matters which were the prerogative of Member States, including issues relating to streamlining the agenda of the General Assembly.

7. The following views were expressed regarding a number of recommendations presented in part one of the report:

(a) *Recommendation 1 (c)*. As the purpose of the joint meetings with the Bretton Woods institutions was to have a frank discussion, some delegations expressed the view that it might not be desirable to produce an outcome document, while others maintained that that represented a good idea;

(b) *Recommendation 1 (d)*. While it was felt that documentation should be provided in a timely fashion to delegations in Geneva, it was suggested that the briefing of delegations in Geneva should be done by the New York missions;

(c) *Recommendation 2*. Concern was expressed about establishing an indicative multi-year horizon for topics to be discussed and it was suggested that the Office of Internal Oversight Services re-examine that issue;

(d) *Recommendation 4*. Concern was expressed that the recommendation was in contradiction with the resolution adopted by the Second Committee every year on operational activities;

(e) *Recommendation 5*. Concern was expressed on the rescheduling of the Economic and Social Council segments throughout the year, because such a measure might affect the participation of small delegations, especially those from the developing countries;

(f) *Recommendation 6 (b)*. The redesign of the Economic and Social Council web site was supported on the condition that such a change would be an enhancement and not a replacement of the existing system, which is widely used by many delegations;

(g) *Recommendation 7*. Delegations emphasized the role of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations in analysing the applications of non-governmental organizations seeking to obtain consultative status with the Economic and Social Council; on the question of enhancing the efficiency of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations, delegations were against the idea of limiting the discussion to previously asked questions, since such a measure could limit the participation of Member States on matters of concern to them.

8. Regarding matters addressed mainly in part two of the document, the Committee expressed serious concern about the continuing problem of the timely issuance of documents. The Committee stressed the importance of delegations' familiarizing themselves with the documents before the sessions and the need to consult their Governments in order to make statements. It was noted that the six-week rule was considered by the Office of Internal Oversight Services to be unrealistic, and clarification was sought on what a realistic deadline for circulating documents would be.

9. Regarding recommendation 1 (a) of part two, it was observed that the recommendation related to the grouping of agenda items and the revitalization of the General Assembly, which would be the subject of upcoming consultations. The issue should therefore not be considered by the Committee until the outcome of those consultations was known and further study of the impact of the recommendation had been made by the Committee.

10. It was further observed that recommendations 1 (a) and (b) of part two of the report were being addressed in the context of the process of reform of the Organization proposed by the Secretary-General in 1997, and they were not approved by the General Assembly. Other similar proposals were being considered in the context of the revitalization of the General Assembly.

11. The view was expressed that the proposals in paragraphs 77 and 78 could have been added to the recommendations presented in the report.

Conclusions and recommendations

12. **The Committee, having considered the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the in-depth evaluation of the subprogrammes on General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and Economic and Social Council support and coordination (E/AC.51/2002/4), concluded that the conclusions and recommendations included in part one of the report should be reviewed by the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session in July 2002 and by its relevant subsidiary bodies, as well as by the competent Main Committees of the General Assembly.**

13. **The Committee noted that some of the recommendations contained in part two of the report related to issues that were being or had been conclusively discussed by the General Assembly and its relevant bodies under various items of the agenda and, in that regard, invited the Committee on Conferences to consider recommendations 1 (c) and (d) and 2 contained in the report, and stressed that, in considering recommendation 2, the need for the provision of adequate services to Member States be kept in mind.**

14. **The Committee, having considered the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services, requested the Secretary-General to take into account the views of all Member States in future evaluation reports of the Office without a selective approach, and stressed the need for the conclusions and recommendations to be reflected objectively, while ensuring justifiability and transparency.**

15. **The Committee expressed deep concern about the question of late issuance of documentation and emphasized that the six-week rule should continue to be observed.**